

CHILDREN'S MUSEUM NEWS

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SIXTEENTH CENTURY FLEMISH TAPESTRY

A MEDIEVAL TAPESTRY

IN THE first issue of The Children's Museum News you read the story of Meleager and the Calydonian Boar Hunt which is pictured in the fine old tapestry in our Gothic Hall. These stories of the old Greeks delighted the people of Europe four hundred years ago.

You remember that we found the story told in small parts which hold together, balancing each other perfectly on the center. We found too that the Brussels weaver used lovely colors for our tapestry which are still bright and clear—red-orange, blue-green, greyed light yellow, and some dark orange.

There are many things of interest in this old tapestry besides the story told in fine design and lovely color.

You will want to notice the armor and the clothing, with trimming of fur and ornaments

of gold and precious jewels, worn by the people of wealth about the time the tapestry was made.

What heavy, long, sweeping clothes they wore in those days—both men and women, do you notice? If you wish, you can compare them with those worn by men and women of France as shown in the collection of costume dolls and with those in the stained glass window of the Fifteenth Century.

You will be interested too in the charming old castle of light greyed yellow with blue-green roof set on a hill, just the kind of castle boys and girls lived in four hundred years ago. Possibly the designer *intended* it to represent the castle of the King of Calydon and Althea and their son Meleager, but *we* know it was a castle of France.

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And you will want to see the three carved columns exactly in the center of the picture, designed with gay festoons of flowers between them. Just under the columns is an illuminated manuscript book, which may remind you of the beautiful ones in the George W. Stevens Gallery.

You will be interested in the gently rolling ground, in the shrubs and trees, and in fruits and flowers in the picture and in the border.

These people of olden days liked the tapestries for their stories, for their design and for their color which made the bare stone walls of their castles bright and gay. But they also liked the warmth of the tapestry covered walls, for stone walls are cold in winter.

Tapestries were very useful too. They could be folded and carried long distances and could be used as blankets, mattress, as pillows to sleep on or as cushions to sit upon, as rugs for the floor, as table or chest coverings, as curtains to keep out the cold, even as saddle cloths.

Being so well made, they scarcely wore out. The people of those days treasured them highly. They were given by kings to their friends, by noblemen to their kings, and by rich men to churches and to those whom they desired to please. And no wonder, for a fine tapestry is a work of art.

As the years rolled on tapestries went out of fashion. No longer were they prized by the many. Only a few people took good care of them while the majority made use of them in most surprising ways. We are told that they used them to cover orange trees to keep them from freezing, for horse blankets, to hang at stable doors to keep out the cold, to stuff in window openings, for door mats on which to wipe muddy feet; they cut them into pieces for their table covers and chair seats—they even burned them to secure the gold and silver used in making them—these beautiful tapestries by master craftsmen of a great art age.

Today tapestries have again come into a place of honor in fine collections and museums; never again will they serve as common things.

In the next Children's Museum News you will learn how tapestries were made by artist-weavers when this was one of the greatest of the arts.

LESSONS IN DESIGN

HAVING in the first weeks learned about a motif and its repetition to form a surface pattern, you are now ready to go on to more advanced problems in Color and Design. In the very next lesson you begin to understand why it is that you have been looking at the pictures and selecting your favorite one.



VALUE STUDY FROM A PAINTING
Helen Harris

Age 10

You go into the galleries with your paper and pencil and black and white paints and make a value study of your painting or a part of your painting which you arrange on your paper to make as good a composition as possible. You have had a talk on composition the first day. You are surprised to know that you use the same principles in this problem. You also learn to see value in color and you are to draw only masses of flat planes in five values with no details. It certainly makes a beautiful and effective problem all in soft greys. You will never forget that picture and what the artist was telling you in paint and form and after you have put the name of the painting and the

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artist's name on it you have started a mental album to which you can turn any day all the rest of your life. You find that you have made a value study of a Museum painting and have learned appreciation, selection, drawing, light and dark in color, and painting in flat tones.

You have also learned that there are many interesting things in color which you would like to know; so when the fourth problem comes you are glad to learn a great many things technically with a color wheel that you make yourself with the colors of the spectrum or rainbow, red, orange, yellow, green, blue and violet, arranged in a circle. You learn about full intensity of color, primary, secondary, related and complementary colors.

You learn that colors have families; for instance, yellow is related to yellow orange and yellow green; that the three primary colors are red, yellow and blue and from these all others may be formed. Red and yellow mixed together make orange; yellow and blue make green, and red and blue make violet. These three you call the secondary colors. When three primary colors are mixed together in equal amounts they produce grey or a neutral. You have learned that any two complementary colors mixed together also make grey. The complementary colors are yellow and violet, orange and blue, red and green. When you use complementary colors together you use small amounts of one intense color and larger amounts of the other neutralized.

In problem five you are again told about repetition and a new principle called rhythm. You go all through the Museum hunting for examples in the Egyptian, Classic, Oriental, Book and Manuscript Galleries and then copy an example of repetition and rhythm. Just as

one object or one area exactly like another is painted several times. Then as you find an accent in music which produces rhythm, you can have rhythm in a border by having a large area and then a small area repeated several times. When you have painted these in the colors of the objects in the Museum you have something which is very good looking.

In the next lesson you apply these borders to a drawing of a useful object. You draw neckties and golf stockings with Egyptian borders, handkerchiefs with Greek borders, collars and cuffs with borders from illuminated manuscripts and kitchen utensils with designs from Egyptian mummy cases. These are all drawn in root shapes and composed on dynamic lines, because in each lesson you use all that you have learned before. This has taught you the simplicity and usefulness of great designs.



REPETITION BORDER FROM:

a. SCULPTURE COURT: b. CLASSICAL GALLERY
Jean Vincent

Age 11

you find repetition in the beating of tom-toms without any accent you can discover repetition in the Museum collections. That means that



ADAPTATION OF RHYTHM BORDER

Ruth Anderson

Age 12

In the seventh lesson you are taught those things for which the different root forms are best adapted—until you can tell by your eye just what root to draw for various objects. For instance, the human figure is best constructed in root 5 with dynamic lines to help you get

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good proportion. You analyze a figure in a Museum painting and paint it in flat planes of color.

In doing this you study the figure for proportion, the relation of head, chest, hip and knee, which will be made easy for you because your dynamic symmetry construction gives

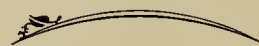
you true figure proportion in a root 5 rectangle. After the proportion has been determined, you look for the important action lines and characteristics of the figure rather than the small details of face and dress. After you have drawn the figure in clean, direct pencil lines you draw in the outlines of shadows. In this way you paint in a flat, decorative treatment, using broad areas of color. From this you learn how to show a great deal with very few brush strokes.

You have learned by now that a color may be raised in value by adding white paint. You use light paint to show your high lights. You add black to darken your paint for shadows. You find that flesh color is not a brilliant, intense hue, it is light yellow-orange neutralized by adding the complementary color. In studying the painting which you have chosen, you notice how simply the artist drew the main lines of the figure, and painted the high lights and shadows. Half close your eyes and look at a person at a distance and you will understand how an artist expresses so much with strong and beautiful simplicity.

There will be other lessons about other principles of color and design and as you continue to come to the class you will learn many more interesting things.



FIGURE FROM MUSEUM PAINTING
Robert Kerstetter Age 12



In his first public address upon the subject of the Museum, Mr. Libbey, our Founder, said that he "would suggest that we allow teachers and scholars free admission to all exhibitions upon certain days set aside for them, for it is my opinion that the object of our institution (the education in and cultivation of art) can find no better field than in our public schools."

So from the start the Toledo Museum has been the children's, and they may use it now on all days, and learn to love and protect its treasures.